

March 9, 2022

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Melinda Tuhus, and I live in Hamden. I am also part of Inspiring Connections Outdoors, a youth outings program for low-income children in New Haven and Hamden. We serve many immigrant families.

I support SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

In the 26 years we have been running the program, there have occasionally been children who got sick while on a trip and their parents did not always have access to medical care for them. There have been other times when parents themselves were sick or their kids were sick and they couldn't come on trips and had to depend on over-the-counter medications, if they could afford them, as their only treatment.

It was a good step when the General Assembly last year expanded access to HUSKY to children ages 0-8 years, but children 9-18 need care just as much or more.

But adults need health care, too, and we must ensure that all immigrants are able to have access to HUSKY and the quality healthcare they need, so the state needs a long-term plan for that. Just the existence of Covid and the reality that so many frontline workers risking their health in the pandemic are undocumented immigrants makes an airtight case for adult HUSKY coverage.

I ask the committee to pass this legislation and to take other steps as soon as possible to provide care for all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Melinda Tuhus